Claims

What is claimed is:

1.   A web-based online store having a user interface for enabling a custom configuration of a computer system according to an identification of a user belonging to a prescribed customer set, said online store comprising:

a configurator for configuring a computer system with options selected according to a desired user input, the options and a respective pricing for each option being presented on a configurator web page;

a database for dynamically supplying configuration options to said configurator in accordance with the identification of the user belonging to the prescribed customer set;

a cart for temporarily storing a customer configured computer system and presenting the customer configured computer system on a cart web page, the cart web page further including at least one user selectable cart option; and

an interactive upsell advisor operatively coupled to said configurator, said database, and said cart for selectively providing an upsell recommendation to said cart as a user selectable cart option on the cart web page, the upsell recommendation being a function of the prescribed customer set, the customer configured computer system, and prescribed upsell advisor business rules.

2.   The online store of claim 1, wherein said database is further for dynamically supplying the prescribed upsell business rules to said upsell advisor, said upsell advisor utilizing the dynamically supplied prescribed upsell business rules in selectively providing upsell recommendations to said cart.

1   3.   The online store of claim 1, wherein said upsell advisor calculates a differential

2   price between the customer configured computer system with the upsell recommendation

3   and the customer configured computer system without the upsell recommendation, said

4   upsell advisor further providing the differential price to said cart.

1   4.   The online store of claim 3, wherein a description of the upsell recommendation,

2   the differential price, and an upgrade now user selectable option are each displayed on

3   the cart web page.

1   5.   The online store of claim 4, wherein upon selection of the upgrade now option by

2   the user, said upsell advisor updates the customer configured computer system

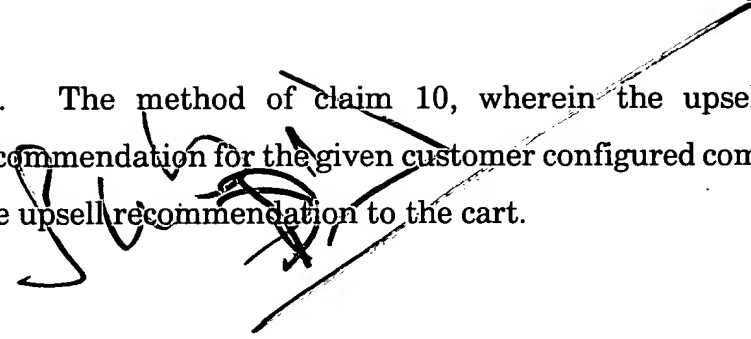3   configuration with the upsell recommendation and then returns the user to said cart.

1   6.   The online store of claim 4, wherein a description of the upsell recommendation,

2   the differential price, and an upgrade now user selectable option are further displayed

3   in a prominent area of the cart web page .

1   7.   The online store of claim 1, wherein said upsell advisor calculates a differential

2   price of an upsell recommendation with respect to the price of the customer configured

3   computer system and provides the differential price to said cart, wherein a description

4   of the upsell recommendation, the differential price, and an upgrade now user selectable

5   option are each displayed in a prominent area on the cart web page, and wherein upon

6   selection of the upgrade now option by the user, said upsell advisor updates the customer

7   configured computer system configuration with the upsell recommendation and then

8   causes the user to reenter said cart.

8.   The online store of claim 1, wherein said cart further includes merchandising recommendations for available options and their respective option details, the merchandising recommendations being presented on the cart web page in the event an upsell recommendation by said upsell advisor is unavailable, and wherein said database is further for dynamically supplying the merchandising recommendations to said cart in accordance with a prescribed customer set.

9.   The online store of claim 1, wherein said upsell advisor validates an upsell recommendation for the given customer configured computer system prior to providing the upsell recommendation to said cart.

10.   A method for enabling a custom configuration of a computer system according to an identification of a user belonging to a prescribed customer set via a user interface of a web-based online store comprising the steps of:

providing a configurator for configuring a computer system with options selected according to a desired user input, the options and a respective pricing for each option being presented on a configurator web page;

providing a database for dynamically supplying configuration options to the configurator in accordance with the identification of the user belonging to the prescribed customer set;

providing a cart for temporarily storing a customer configured computer system and presenting the customer configured computer system on a cart web page, the cart web page further including at least one user selectable cart option; and

providing an interactive upsell advisor operatively coupled to the configurator, the database, and the cart for selectively providing an upsell recommendation to the cart as a user selectable cart option on the cart web page, the upsell recommendation being a function of the prescribed customer set, the customer configured computer system, and prescribed upsell advisor business rules.

11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the database is further for dynamically supplying the prescribed upsell business rules to the upsell advisor, the upsell advisor utilizing the dynamically supplied prescribed upsell business rules in selectively providing upsell recommendations to the cart.

12.   The method of claim 10, wherein the upsell advisor calculates a differential price between the customer configured computer system with the upsell recommendation and the customer configured computer system without the upsell recommendation, the upsell advisor further providing the differential price to the cart.

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5   13.   The method of claim 12, wherein a description of the upsell recommendation, the

6   differential price, and an upgrade now user selectable option are each displayed on the

7   cart web page.

1   14.   The method of claim 13, wherein upon selection of the upgrade now option by the

2   user, the upsell advisor updates the customer configured computer system configuration

3   with the upsell recommendation and then returns the user to the cart.

1   15.   The method of claim 13, wherein a description of the upsell recommendation, the

2   differential price, and an upgrade now user selectable option are further displayed in a

3   prominent area of the cart web page .

1   16.   The method of claim 10, wherein the upsell advisor calculates a differential price

2   of an upsell recommendation with respect to the price of the customer configured

3   computer system and provides the differential price to the cart, wherein a description of

4   the upsell recommendation, the differential price, and an upgrade now user selectable

5   option are each displayed in a prominent area on the cart web page, and wherein upon

6   selection of the upgrade now option by the user, the upsell advisor updates the customer

7   configured computer system configuration with the upsell recommendation and then

8   causes the user to reenter the cart.

1   17.   The method of claim 10, wherein the cart further includes merchandising

2   recommendations for available options and their respective option details, the

3   merchandising recommendations being presented on the cart web page in the event an

4   upsell recommendation by the upsell advisor is unavailable, and wherein the database

5   is further for dynamically supplying the merchandising recommendations to the cart in

6   accordance with a prescribed customer set.

7 18.   The method of claim 10, wherein the upsell advisor validates an upsell

8 recommendation for the given customer configured computer system prior to providing

9 the upsell recommendation to the cart.